DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 225 CS 505 691

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TITLE An Examination of the Sex-Role and Occupational-Role Presentations of Female Characters in Award-Winning Children's Picture Books.
PUB DATE May 87
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (37th, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, May 21-25, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Characterization; *Childrens Literature; Content Analysis; *Females; Males; Occupations; *Picture Books; Preschool Children; Reading Materials; Sex Bias; *Sex Role; *Sex Stereotypes
IDENTIFIERS Caldecott Award; *Occupational Models; Occupational Stereotypes

ABSTRACT

A study examined the number of times male and female characters appear in text and illustrations and also evaluated the occupations and activities of the characters found in the 14 books which received the Caldecott Medal winning children's books for the years 1971 to 1984. Specifically examined were the following: (1) whether there was a difference between the number of male and female characters in the picture books; (2) whether there was a difference between the activities and occupations of males and females in the books; and (3) whether there has been a change in the number and types of portrayals of male and female characters in picture books since a study by Lenore Weitzman (1972). Results indicated that male and female characters in children's picture books continue to be shown in unequal numbers and stereotypical roles. Males greatly outnumber females in frequency of appearances and in variety of activities and occupations. Males are shown twice as often as females, on the average, in every type of activity. Males are also given three times as many career choices as females, and they are pictured three times as often in these roles. Finally, although these results seem to indicate a strong bias in the books, in fact the results represent a great improvement from the Weitzman study. (Notes and references are attached.) (MKA)

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An Examination of the Sex-Role and Occupational-Role Presentations of Female Characters in Award-Winning Children's Picture Books

by

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Presented to the Mass Communication Division of the International Communications Association Conference in Montreal, Quebec, May 1987

Accepted for publication at Women's Studies in Communications, September 1987.

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The examination of different images and themes in media for children have long been popular research topics. With the development of each new medium, researchers, parents, and educators hypothesize about its effects on children's morals, attitudes, school achievement. Along with each new medium came, too, a seeming "forgetfulness" about the impact of older media. People put aside (at least temporarily) their worry over the impact of film when radio became popular, and radio when television became popular. One medium that was all but overlooked with the advent of broadcast media was children's books. However, the 1960s and 1970s showed a resurgence in interest in the examination of children's books. A number of studies done in this period concluded that children's books were important for the development of self-concept, world view, and language and reading.[1] Literature for both children and adults was shown to reflect and affect the society of its time.

The purpose of this study is to examine the contents of the Caldecott Medal winning books published since 1971 to see if the number and images of the female characters have changed since a similar study conducted by Weitzman, Eifler, Hakoda, and Ross, using Caldecott Medal winning books published between 1938 and 1970.[2] The research will determine whether the characterizations and themes portrayed in the literature are adjusting with the changing society, and whether women are being portrayed in less stereotypical ways.

According to Weitzman et. al.:

> Children's books reflect cultural values and are an important instrument for persuading children to accept those values. They also contain certain role prescriptions which encourage the child to conform to acceptable standards of behavior.[3]

Cohen and Miel and Kiersten concluded that the images to which children are exposed can affect the ways they view themselves and the ways they view members

of other groups. Somewhat later, Gast and Deiterich reported that books transmitted social values and attitudes about minority groups, and Glancy held that a healthier psychological growth can be achieved through books by increasing the child's awareness of people of different backgrounds.[4]

Thus, if picture books are indeed tools for developing a child's self concept and his or her ideas of society, then we should be concerned about the kinds of images that are being transmitted to children. If books are not biased, they will present accurate and realistic portrayals of men and women in number and occupational roles. Pamela Butler, in Self Assertion for Women, claimed that "the consequences of stereotyped femininity are: 1) reduced assertiveness -- inability to control external influences in life, express anger, experience competency, and become a problem-solving human being; 2) emotional distress; 3) powerlessness; and 4) depression."[5]

Weitzman et al. concluded from studying their sample of picture books: "Most children's books are about boys, men, and male animals, and most deal exclusively with male adventures." They found that females were underrepresented in the central roles, pictures, and stories of every sample of books they examined.[6]

In a study of children's literature published between 1820 and 1860, MacLeod found "an intense interest in family and childhood" and themes of "sharpened nationalism." She explains: "It was undoubtedly the American preoccupation with the future that was the strongest impetus behind the development of a non-school juvenile literature before 1860....Written out of a concern for children and country, the literature could not but embody something of its author's expectations and apprehensions for the future of both."[7]

Kelly examined children's periodical literature from 1865 to 1890. He

found the fiction to be primarily a socializing tool for children. He explained: "The fiction...must be seen essentially and fundamentally as a series of efforts over time to transmit their culture to another generation."[8]

In a study of post-Civil War literature for children, Erisman found that many stories had "place, story, and character...tightly integrated." He labeled these works "local color stories" and called them "the first notable acknowledgment of America's cultural diversity in the nineteenth century." These works, according to Erisman, "helped to reunite the divided nation." The result, concludes Erisman, is "to pass on to the members of the next generation a conservative, traditional view of American life."[9]

These studies provide evidence that the literature written for children in the nineteenth century assisted in the education and socialization of children. Childrens' stories introduced readers to new and different locations in the United States, and they passed on the values of earlier times. The literature reflected the traditional values in American society and was used as a way of transmitting those values.

These studies of nineteenth century literature written for children did not concentrate on the characterizations of women and minorities. MacLeod, however, did comment in her report that she "saw very little open differentiation between boys and girls" and that she found the stories "interestingly non-sexist sometimes."[10]

Studies of more current literature, however, have concentrated on the portrayals of women and minorities. Nilson and Weitzman et al. confirmed that picture books play an important role in the socialization of children and that children learn about the world through books. Both examined award winning picture books and concluded that portrayals of males greatly outnumbered

portrayals of females. They also found the variety of occupational roles assigned to females much more limited in scope than those offered to males. Nilson discovered the "cult of the apron" -- in the 25 pictures featuring female characters, all but four of those females were pictured wearing aprons. Women wore their aprons to the supermarket, the public market in Mexico, and even the Public Garden in Boston.[11]

Weitzman et al. studied popular books in addition to award winners and found female characters to be "usually insignificant or inconspicuous." They also reported that "in the world of picture books, boys are active and girls are passive"; that images of women were stereotyped and limited, and that males were pictured in more varied and interesting roles than were females.[12]

Heyn reported on the "endless repetition of the female in (traditional) roles only, and the extreme scarcity of women projected in leadership, political, or creative positions" in the sample of children's books she examined.[13] Stewig and Higgs examined 154 picture books and found thirteen which included no women at all. Of the books which did portray women, 83 percent of them depicted women in homemaking roles, while only 17 percent were portrayed in more professional roles. They concluded that "women were portrayed in one of two ways: 1) as a housewife and mother doing essentially dull and uninteresting tasks, or 2) women engaged in occupations (semi-professional) typically considered appropriate for females (teacher, maid, nun)."[14]

Donlan concluded that children's books convey an "underlying assertion that women are inferior." The females in the books he analyzed were portrayed "either as ineffectual creatures who needed to be dominated by men or as aggressive monsters who must be destroyed by men." He discovered three

recurrent female types in the nursery rhymes and traditional folk tales he examined: 1) the sweet old lady who is eccentric, befuddled, and imperceptive; 2) the beautiful young heroine who is dull-witted, spiritless, and passive; and 3) the independent woman who is evil or hateful.[15]

Gersoni-Stavn examined prize-winning novels and was struck by the "sweeping, sometimes contradictory (and often condemnatory) nature of the author's statements about the female sex that get dropped into dialogue or inserted as undeveloped asides; and the fact that the girl friends and mothers are almost always unrealized or unpleasant characters -- one-dimensional, idealized, insipid, bitchy, or castrating."[16]

In her book, Mother was Not A Person, Margaret Anderson reported that "in children's books, particularly fairy tales, there exists both a rigidity and a belittling of the women's role." She continued, "Although in many books small boys and girls can share adventures, the girl must remain aware of her female role. By adulthood, the female has given up adventuring for the home; she encourages her men to go out to fulfill their destinies. And, because of the absoluteness of sex roles, all expression of emotion is left to females."[17]

In "The Second Sex, Junior Division," Elizabeth Fisher points out that in picture books, women were generally shown only in relation to men. She reported: "Friendship between boys is much touted; friendship between boys and girls is frequent; but friendship between girls gets less attention."[18] Even books promoted by publishers were found by Feminists on Children's Media to show "a preponderance of stories about love, dating, and romance. And there are companion books about young girls with problems like shyness, overweight, glasses, acne, and so on, that are supposed to interfere with romance."[19]

Perhaps due to the popularity of television viewing as a leisure-time

activity for children, there have been very few recent content analyses of picture books. In 1972, Women on Words and Images examined the stories and pictures in 134 elementary school readers. They found stories were six times more likely to feature boys than girls and that men were pictured in 147 different occupations and women only 26. They determined that girls were portrayed as passive admirers while boys were active doers.[20]

Stefflre, Frisnof, and Trecker analyzed images in textbooks for all grades and found similar statistics. They found an underrepresentation of women in occupational roles other than housewife/mother, an over-representation of boys in leadership roles, and the virtual absence of women on the frontier or in colonial time.

As a result of these studies, many publishing companies have published guidelines for improving the images of women in textbooks. Scott Foresman Company, for example, has a code that specifies that the sexist attitudes of the past should not be reflected in current publications.

But no code of this sort has been developed by the publishers of children's picture books. And no studies have been published recently to see if the content of picture books has become more egalitarian and more reflective of today's society.

This research project set out to examine the number of times male and female characters appear in picture book text and illustrations, and to evaluate the occupations and activities of these characters. The sample chosen to be studied was the total population of Caldecott Medal winners for the years 1971 to 1984. The Caldecott Medal is awarded by the American Library Association to "the artist of the most distinguished picture book for children published in the United States during the previous year."[21]

The study was modeled after one by Weitzman et al. in which they examined picture books for their portrayals of male and female characters.

The text and illustrations of the books were examined to find the answers to the following specific research questions: 1) Is there a difference between the number of male and female characters in the picture books? 2) Is there a difference between the activities and occupations of males and females in the picture books? 3) Has there been a change in the number and types of portrayals of male and female characters in picture books since the Weitzman et al. study?

METHOD

An examination was made of the fourteen books that received the Caldecott Medal from 1971 through 1984. This sample of books was chosen to provide an historical examination that extends the period of analysis used in the Weitzman et al. study. See Table 1 for a list of the books included. These books were originally selected by Weitzman et al. for the following reasons: "The (Caldecott) medal is the most coveted prize for preschool books. Books on the list of winners (and runners-up) are ordered by practically all children's libraries in the United States. Teachers and educators encourage children to read the Caldecotts, and conscientious parents skim the library shelves looking for those books that display the impressive gold seal which designates the winners. The Caldecott award often means sales of 60,000 books for the publisher, and others in the industry look to the winners for guidance in what to publish."[22]

The text and illustrations of the books were examined by the author and a second coder, and the number of occurrences of male and female characters was tabulated. The activities and obvious occupations of the characters were also

tabulated. Agreement between the two coders was 93%.

The unit of analysis was defined as "each individual character mentioned in the text and each individual portrayed in illustrations." Multiple portrayals of the same character in several illustrations were counted separately, but repeated references in the text were counted only once. Characters were coded based on gender, age (divided into categories of child - characters appearing to be under 13 years of age; adolescent - characters appearing to be between 13 and 18 years old; adult - characters appearing to be over 18 years old; other - characters whose age was unidentifiable), activity performed, and occupation pictured.

Activities were divided into two broad categories (Active/Mobile and Passive/Immobile) with five sub-categories under each. "Active/Mobile" referred primarily to active and adventurous activities. This category was divided into 1)leadership actions; 2)athletic actions; 3)aggressive actions; 4)social actions; and 5)professional actions. "Passive/Immobile" referred primarily to non-active and non-adventurous activities. This category was divided into 1)service actions; 2)relaxation actions; 3)spectator actions; 4)amorous actions; and 5)primping/posing. See Table 2 for definitions of activities.

Occupation is defined according to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, as "the principal business of one's life; vocation."[23] Adult characters were examined for obvious references (textual and pictorial) to an occupation or vocation. An exhaustive list was compiled based on the occupations pictured in the sample. See Table 3 for a list of occupations pictured.

RESULTS

According to Weitzman et al., "A tabulation of the distribution of

illustrations in the picture books is probably the best single indicator of the importance of men and women in these books."[24] In the sample of Caldecott Medal winners from 1971 to 1984, there are 751 pictures of males and 375 pictures of females. This is a ratio of approximately 2:1. If Weitzman's assumption about the relative importance of characters is correct, this ratio could be interpreted to mean that males are twice as important as female in this sample of books.

Five of the 14 books had a male/female ratio of less than this average, but nine books had male/female ratios of much higher than 2:1. Three books had male/female ratios of greater than 5:1, and one (Noah's Ark) contained a male/female ratio of almost 8:1.

The texts contain references to 86 male characters, 57 female characters, and 18 undefined characters. This gives a male/female ratio of 1.5:1, lower than the male/female distribution found in the illustrations.

If we examine the book titles for character references, there is an even ratio of three titles featuring males and three titles featuring females. (The words "Man," "Woman," and "Girl" were included here) And if we go further and look at central characters in the stories, the ratio of male-centered stories to female-centered stories is 6:4 or 1.5:1. The other four books are: 1) a compilation of different stories (Fables, Ashanti to Zulu); 2) a story about a boy and a girl (Jumanji); and 3) a story about a "thing" (Shadow).

All of these tabulations yield approximately the same ratio of male and female characters: 1.5:1.

An examination of author's genders demonstrated that there is no relationship between gender of the authors and gender of the central characters. The six books about males were written by three males, two females

and one male-and-female team. One male author was accompanied by a female illustrator. The four books featuring females were written by two females, one male, and one male-and-female team. One female author teamed with a female illustrator, and the other female author hooked up with a male-and-female illustrating team on her book.

Overall, the 14 books were written by six male authors, six female authors, and two male-and-female teams. The books were illustrated by five males, five females, and four male-and-female teams.

ACTIVITIES

In examining the activities of the characters, an interesting pattern emerged. When the totals for all the books were added, male characters were found to outnumber female characters in every activity category.

The following table contains the total number of males, females, and unspecified characters in each of the categories.

Active/Mobile	Male	Female	Don't Know
Leadership	29	3	0
Athletic	63	15	4
Aggressive	47	24	3
Social	96	67	2
Professional	52	10	0
Total	317	119	9
Passive/Immobile	**Male**	**Female**	**Don't Know**
Service	36	27	3
Relaxation	83	45	7
Spectator	247	136	50
Amorous	21	15	1
Primping/Posing	47	33	5
Total	436	256	75

Male characters are found to outnumber female characters almost three to one in the Active/Mobile category of activities. Twenty-nine males are pictured in leadership activities, while only three females are pictured in that category. Males are often shown leading activities and controlling the

actions of others, but females are often shown being led or told what to do. Males are pictured 63 times in athletic activities, and females only 15 times. This is a ratio of over four males to every one female. And 52 males perform professional activities, but only 10 females perform similar types of activities. This is a male/female ratio of 5:1.

Males outnumber females 47 to 24 in aggressive activities, and 96 to 67 (1.4:1) in social activities. An important note to make here is that the aggressive category contains both aggressive actions performed to harm someone or something, and actions performed to get away from a harmful aggressor. In the case of the females included in this category, eight are shown acting aggressively against someone and 16 are pictured fleeing their aggressors. Of the 8 illustrations that show females acting aggressively, only one shows a human female (an old woman in One Fine Day cuts off a fox's tail after he drinks her pail of milk). Two pictures feature a fairy slapping a doll (in A Story, A Story), and the remaining five pictures show witches chasing Squire Lovel out of their meeting (in Duffy and the Devil).

Similarly, most of the male characters shown in aggressive activities are not humans. They are animals (the stallion in the Girl Who Loved Wild Horses; the python, monkey, crow, and iguana in Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears), ogres (Wicked Oni in The Funny Little Woman), the devil (in Duffy and the Devil), gods (in Arrow to the Sun), and the Shadow in Shadow.

The human males shown engaging in aggressive activities are: the hunters in The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses, the warriors in Shadow, the farmer in Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears, and the boys in Arrow to the Sun. The males pictured fleeing from an aggressor are the fox in One Fine Day (from the old woman) and Peter in Jumanji (from a lion).

Occupations

In comparing the occupations pictured for males and females, males are shown far more often in occupational roles and with far greater diversity than females. In the sample, 139 males and 44 females are pictured with occupations. This is a ratio of more than 3:1. And, if the variety of occupations offered to each group is examined, the ratio remains the same. Males are shown in 29 different occupations, and females in only 10. See Table 3 for a tabulation of occupations shown.

Almost half of the females (20) are shown as homemakers. Most of the females tend to babies, cook meals, and clean the house. Ten females are pictured as witches (in Duffy and the Devil) and one is a fairy (in A Story A Story). This leaves only 12 human females with occupations other than homemaker. These females are shown as merchants, farmers, singers, and a dancer, artisan, and queen.

In contrast to this limited scope of occupational roles for females, males are pictured in three times as many occupations. Six males each appeared as monsters (The Funny Little Woman) and gods (A Story, A Story; Arrow to the Sun) and one male devil is featured in Duffy and the Devil. the 126 human males, then practiced 26 different occupations. The jobs assigned to them include farmer (19), tribal dancer (16), athlete (11), soldier (8), merchant (8), hunter (8), guard (6), artisan (6), priest (4), king (4), fisherman (4), and police officer (3).

COMPARISON WITH WEITZMAN ET AL.'S RESULTS

Since Weitzman et al. did not publish their exact coding categories, only

general comparisons can be made between the results of this study and the results of the Weitzman et al. study.

Weitzman et al. concluded from studying their sample of picture books: "Most children's books are about boys, men, and male animals, and most deal exclusively with male adventures."[25] They found that females were underrepresented in the central roles, pictures, and stories of every sample of books they examined; this study found the same, but it did not find such extreme differences as the Weitzman et al. study. In the sample of Caldecott Medal winners from 1965 to 1970, Weitzman et al. found a male/female ratio of 11 to 1. However, the ratio found in this study was 2 to 1. Weitzman et al. found a male/female ratio of 95:1 when they looked only at animals "with obvious identities." This sample found an animal-male/female ratio of 2.4:1.

When they examined the titles of all the Caldecott Medal winners from 1938 to 1970, Weitzman et al. found the ratio of titles featuring males to those featuring females to be 8:3. This sample proved to have an exactly even ratio -- 3 books featured female's names and 3 featured male's names.

Weitzman et al. found that a significant majority of the books they examined featured some form of male adventure. This was true in the present study as well. Almost every book presented males in some sort of adventure. Ananse, in A Story A Story, outwits a leopard, a nest of hornets, and an invisible fairy in order to please the Sky God. In The Funny Little Woman, the Wicked Oni is shown kidnapping the woman; and the devil in Duffy and the Devil dances with the witches. In Arrow to the Sun, the Boy easily passes through the four chambers of ceremony in order to become a man. He conquers lions, serpents, bees, and even lightning. Noah, in Noah's Ark, herds hundreds of animals onto his ark and sets sail during a terrible storm. A young mouse in

Fables sets off alone to find the seashore, encountering and outsmarting cats, birds, and dogs to arrive to watch the sun set over the ocean. Louis Bleriot in The Glorious Flight is the first person to fly an airplane across the English Channel.

In their study, Weitzman et al. found that only two books out of the 18 most recently published ones contained stories about girls. In this sample, 3 of the 14 books featured females (The Funny Little Woman, The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses, Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears), and one featured a female and a male together (Jumanji). In The Funny Little Woman, the woman steals a boat and escapes from her captors. The girl in The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses decides to live with wild horses instead of people, and in the end, becomes a horse; and in Duffy and the Devil, Duffy makes a deal with a devil and Old Jone (the maid) helps her out of her predicament. In Jumanji, Judy and Peter both play a jungle adventure game, and Judy eventually saves them by winning the game.

The female heroes in Weitzman et al.'s sample were found to triumph only "by playing the traditional feminine role." In this sample, the only female hero that acts in a traditional feminine role is the girl in The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses. She succeeds at moving away from her people and living with wild horses because she is accepted as the stallion's companion. This acceptance turns to ultimate integration when she gives up her human form for a horse's form. The other three female heroes show courage and cleverness in the execution of their adventures. The woman in The Funny Little Woman, though clumsy, shows courage when she runs away from the Oni and steals their boat. Old Jone displays cleverness in Duffy and the Devil when she plans a trap for both the Squire and the devil; and Judy demonstrates her boldness in Jumanji by

insisting that she and Peter play the game (even though there is a warning on the box), and by making sure they finish it. So, while males are shown more often than females in adventurous activities, the females that are shown do display courage and cleverness.

Weitzman et al. found that "in the world of picture books, boys are active and girls are passive. Not only are boys presented in more exciting and adventuresome roles, but they engage in more varied pursuits and demand more independence."[26] In this sample, the same is generally found to be true. However, it must be stated here that children and adolescents make up a very small number of the characters in the stories. The overall distribution of characters by age group is: 666 adults, 69 adolescents, and 184 children. Adults outnumber adolescents almost 10 to 1, and children 5 to 1.

If we examine the activities of children, almost half are shown in spectator actions (82) and this is divided practically evenly between the sexes (38 boys, 36 girls, 8 don't know). Of the 14 books, 4 feature children in adventurous activities.

Male children outnumber female children in every activity except socializing and primping/posing. While boys are often shown running and jumping, girls are shown watching patiently or engaged in social activities with their mothers.

Weitzman et al. attribute the differences in amounts and types of activity to the females' clothing: "skirts and dresses are soiled easily and prohibit more adventuresome activities."[27] Every single female in the sample for this study appeared in a dress or skirt (with the exception of female animals who were shown in bonnets or a tutu). This clothing did not prohibit the females mentioned above from participating in adventurous activities, but I did find it

interesting that females were shown in every instance in a dress -- even on Noah's Ark, in the garden, and in the snow.

Weitzman et al. proposed that adult role models provide another crucial component of sex-role socialization. By observing adult men and women, boys and girls learn what will be expected of them when they grow older. They are likely to identify with adults of the same sex, and to desire to be like them. Thus, role models not only present children with future images of themselves, but they also influence a child's aspirations and goals.

They found the image of the adult female to be "stereotyped and limited," while "the roles that men play are varied and interesting." In this sample, male adults appeared 444 times and female adults 205 times (unspecified adults appeared 17 times). Over-all men are shown more than twice as often as women in the illustrations. Men appear almost three times as often as women in active/mobile activities (185 to 68), and 11 times as often in leadership activities (55 to 5). When men lead, women follow. When men perform, women watch. And, men are often pictured in the foreground of an illustration while a woman with a baby looks on from the background (This was especially true for Ashanti to Zulu).

Adult females are almost always shown with babies or children, and they often perform domestic duties. None of the books contains a single illustration of a male cooking or engaging in domestic activities (except in Duffy and the Devil -- the devil is pictured spinning and knitting, but he does it for the purpose of trapping Duffy). The only illustration which shows a father involved with his children is in Ashanti to Zulu. This picture shows a Quinbande father with three wives and several children. He is shown seated in the center of the picture playing a board game with some of the children while

his wives look on. There are no other pictures of men holding or even touching a child.

These limited portrayals of mothers and fathers offer very different role models to boys and girls. If readers do learn from picture books, girls may learn that it is their job to take sole responsibility for child rearing and domestic activities. Boys, on the other hand may learn to expect their wives to do the housework and cater to their needs. These unreal expectations of marriage could lead to disappointment and discontent in both the male and female partners.

Finally, Weitzman et al. discovered that not one woman in the Caldecott sample had a job or profession. They found men in roles such as storekeepers, housebuilders, kings, storytellers, gods, fighters, fishermen, and policemen. This sample found an increase in the number of females engaged in professional roles; however, while women are shown in 10 different occupations, only one appears to be a paying job -- merchant. The rest -- queen, fairy, dancer, singer, artisan -- appear to be activities pursued for enjoyment, rather than as a means of employment. In contrast, the men in the sample are shown in various professions -- as kings, police officers, soldiers, merchants, guards, pilots, auto mechanics, priests, waiters, carpenters, and animal keepers. Weitzman et al.'s comments appear suitable here as well: "It is no disparagement of the housewife or mother to point out that alternative roles are available to, and chosen by, many women and that girls can be presented with alternative models so that they, like boys, may be able to think of a wide range of future options.... Picture books could inspire children to strive for personal and occupational goals that would take them beyond their everyday world. Instead, women are denied both the due recognition for their present

achievements and the encouragement to aspire to more broadly defined possibilities in the future."[28]

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study revealed that male and female characters in children's picture books continue to be pictured in unequal numbers and stereotypical roles. While the divergence in this sample is not as great as was found in the past studies, it still remains that males greatly outnumber females in number of appearances and variety of activities and occupations. Males are shown twice as often as females, on the average, in every type of activity. Males are given three times as many career choices as females and they are pictured three times as often in these roles.

While these results may seem to indicate a strong bias in the books, they represent a great improvement from the Weitzman et al. study. In 1970, Weitzman et al. found the male/female ratio in character distribution to be 11 to 1. They discovered no females with professions pictured in their sample of Caldecott Medal winners. The Weitzman et al. study concluded that girls are able to succeed in adventures only if they act in "the traditional feminine role." This study, in contrast, discovered a 2:1 male/female ratio and 44 females with occupations. The sample included three stories featuring females and one featuring both a male and a female. True, females were often pictured in "the traditional feminine role," but they were not limited to it; females used their brains as well as their beauty to triumph in problem situations.

In fact, attractiveness is mentioned as an important characteristic for only a limited number of the female characters. The old woman in One Fine Day is not attractive; however, the fair maiden in this story is pretty and serves

no other purpose than to look beautiful. Neither Judy in Jumanji nor the girl in The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses are described as being attractive -- that is, until the girl turns into a "beautiful mare."

Whereas beauty is an attribute for some of the female characters, strength and pride are admirable traits in some of the males. The stallion in The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses is described as "proud and handsome; the Boy in Arrow to the Sun proves his strength by passing through the four chambers of ceremony; Louis Bleriot (in The Glorious Flight) accepts the "dangerous challenge" of flying across the English Channel; and Ananse (in A Story A Story), though an old man, is strong and clever enough to outsmart the gods and carry them up to the Sky God.

This study does indicate, however, that children's books are continuing to portray a male-dominated society. The text and illustrations of these books serve to reinforce the idea that females are less important and less active members of society. Even though many of these books are re-tellings of old folk tales, using male-oriented tales to socialize children today can limit the readers' ability to actively create their own gender identities. The narrow range of images portrayed both textually and pictorially indicate that both visual and written communication can play active roles in the construction and maintenance of certain gender conceptions.

According to Weitzman et al., "Preschool children invest their intellects and imaginations in picture books at a time when they are forming their self-images and future expectations."[29] If children in this stage of development are presented with a variety of characters and character roles, then we can conclude that they should have expectations of broader future possibilities than would children who are exposed to only a limited number of

narrowly-defined characters.

Because this study focused on the content of the books and not on the readers, it will not attempt to draw conclusions about the effects of the content on its readers. Instead, I present this as a call for less bias in children's books. Presenting males and females both in a variety of traditional and non-traditional roles would give readers more of an opportunity to expand their imaginations. A less structured gender differentiation could also serve to advance children's understanding of a more egalitarian society. And, if books provide children with role-models -- images of what they can and should be like when they grow up -- what could be the harm in presenting an abundance of possible role models to children?

Textbook manufacturers are responding to the changes in our society by requiring that text book illustrations include equal and accurate representations of women and minorities. Why haven't picture book manufacturers developed a comparable standard? Perhaps because of the distinction made between educational and entertainment content -- entertainment content doesn't have to be "real." But, by continually presenting an unbalanced ratio of male and female characters, and a limited range of activities for these characters, both boys and girls lose out. Even though boys have more characters to identify with, very often those characters are limited in their activity choices. Stereotypes could be weakened by books showing boys being rewarded for being emotional and supportive, and girls being rewarded for being intelligent and adventuresome.

Young readers could be offered a wider variety of characters in their story books. Characters of both sexes could be shown engaging in a variety of activities. The simplified and stereotyped images in these books present such

a narrow view of reality that they must violate the child's own knowledge of a rich and complex world. Indeed, at a time when many mothers are part of the work force and many children live in single parent homes, picture books continue to present two-parent families with a mother who tends to the children and the house alone and full-time.

No conclusions about the whole of children's picture books can be drawn from this limited study. It is important here to repeat that the Caldecott Medal is awarded to the illustrators of the books, and not the authors of the stories. Also, many of the 14 books in this sample proved to be about people and events in another country and another time period. Several of the stories are old folk tales translated from Danish, African, of Indian languages. And since the folk tales feature the adventures of male characters, the illustrators are expected to picture the characters accordingly.

Further research should examine stories that have been written recently to see whether male and female characters are pictured in equal numbers and types of activities. While television programs continue to introduce more female and minority characters into their activities, are picture books following this trend? Also, further research on the influence of these books on children's role expectations is warranted. As Weitzman et al. note:

> "Stories have always been a means for perpetuating the fundamental cultural values and myths. Stories have also been a stimulus for fantasy imagination and achievement. Books could develop this latter quality to encourage the imagination and creativity of all children. This could provide an important implementation of the growing demand for BOTH girls and boys to have a real opportunity to fulfill their human potential."[30]

TABLE 1

LIST OF BOOKS EXAMINED

1971: Haley, Gail E. A Story A Story. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

1972: Hogrogian, Nonny. One Fine Day. London: McMillan Company, 1971.

1973: Mosel, Arlene (Illustrated by Blair Lent). The Funny Little Woman. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1972.

1974: Zemach, Harve and Margo. Duffy and the Devil. New York: Farray Straus Giroux, 1973.

1975: McDermott, Gerald. Arrow to the Sun. New York: Viking Press, 1974.

1976: Aardema, Verna (Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon). Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears. New York: The Dial Press, 1975.

1977: Musgrove, Margaret (Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon). Ashanti to Zulu. New York: The Dial Press, 1976.

1978: Spier, Peter. Noah's Ark. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1977.

1979: Goble, Paul. The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses. Scarsdale, New York: Bradbury Press, 1978.

1980: Hall, Donald (Illustrated by Barbara Cooney). Ox-Cart Man. New York: The Viking Press, 1979.

1981: Lobel, Arnold. Fables. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.

1982: Van Allsburg, Chris. Jumanji. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

1983: Brown, Marcia. Shadow. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982.

1984: Provenson, Alice and Martin Provenson. The Glorious Flight Across the Channel With Louis Bleriot. New York: The Viking Press, 1983.

TABLE 2
DEFINITION OF ACTIVITIES

ACTIVE/MOBILE

Leadership Actions: Guiding, going in front to show the way, controlling action, teaching someone.

Rescue Actions: Planning and executing a rescue, saving someone from danger, capture, or attack.

Athletic Actions: Activities pursued primarily for physical exercise, recreation. Running, competing.

Aggressive/Violent Actions: Chasing or striking another person, animal, or thing with intent to do harm. Kidnapping, arguing.

Fleeing Actions: Running away from another person, animal, or thing that is threatening.

Social Actions: Dancing with others, singing with others, engaging in conversation with others. Cheering.

Mischief Actions: Trickery. Activities that are annoying, but not malicious. Teasing.

Clumsy Actions: Activities showing a lack of physical skill or grace. Falling, slipping, stumbling, losing one's way.

Professional Actions: Activities that are directly related to one's occupation, employment.

Consumer Actions: Shopping, browsing.

PASSIVE/IMMOBILE

Service Actions: Performing services for another, working for another, assisting another, helping.

Spectator Actions: Watching the activity or actions of others, waiting.

Amorous Actions: Showing affection or love for a person, animal, or thing.

Relaxation Actions: Activities pursued primarily for rest, relaxation.

Passive Recreation/Play: Leisure activities not requiring much physical exertion. Walking, playing a board game, assembling a puzzle.

Eating/Drinking

Primping Actions: Activities pursued for the purpose of enhancing one's appearance. Putting on make-up, combing hair, looking in a mirror.

Posing: Characters situated in a manner so it appears they are posing for a photograph. Standing still, looking straight ahead -- "at the camera."

TABLE 3

TOTAL OCCUPATIONS PICTURED

	M	F	DK
ANIMAL KEEPER	3		
ARTISAN	6	1	
ATHLETE	11		
AUTO MECHANIC	3		
AVIATOR	3		
BUM	1		
BUTCHER	1		
CARPENTER	1		
CONSTRUCTION WORKER	2		
DANCER	16	1	
DEVIL	1		
FAIRY		1	
FARMER	19	2	
FISHERMAN	4		
GOD	6		
GUARD	8		
GUIDE	1		
HOMEMAKER	1	20	
HUNTER	8		1
INDIAN CHIEF	1		
KING	4		
MERCHANT	8	5	
MILLER	1		
MONSTER	6		
MUSICIAN	6		
POLICE OFFICER	3		
QUEEN		1	
RELIGIOUS(PRIEST,NUN,ETC.)	4		
SINGER		3	1
SOLDIER	8		
STORY TELLER	2		
WAITER	1		
WITCH		10	
TOTAL	139	44	2

ENDNOTES

1. Jeanne S. Chall, Eugene Radwin, Valarie W. French, Cynthia R. Hall, "Blacks in the World of Children's Books," The Reading Teacher, 32, No. 5 (1979).

2. Lenore J. Weitzman, Deborah Eifler, Elizabeth Hokada, and Catherine Ross, "Sex-Role Socialization in Picture Books for Preschool Children," American Journal of Sociology, 77, no. 6 (1972).

3. Weitzman et. al., pp. 1125-1126.

4. Chall, p. 528.

5. Pamela Butler, Self Assertion for Women: A Guide to Becoming Androgynous (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1976), p. iv.

6. Weitzman et. al., p. 1126.

7. Anne Scott Macleod, "Children's Literature and American Culture: 1820-1860," in Society and Children's Literature, ed. James H. Fraser (Boston: Godine Publishers, 1978), p. 25.

8. R. Gordon Kelly, "SOcial Factors Shaping Some Late Nineteenth Century Children's Periodical Fiction," in Society and Children's Literature ed. by James H. Fraser (Boston: Godine Publishers, 1978), pp. 38-39.

9. Fred Erisman, "Regionalism in American Children's Literature," in Society and Children's Literature ed. James H. Fraser (Boston: Godine Publishers, 1978), pp. 55-59.

10. MacLeod, p. 25.

11. Aileen Pace Nilson, "Women in Children's Literature," College English, Volume 32 (1971), pp. 918-925.

12. Weitzman et al. p. 1129.

13. Leah Heyn, "Children's Books," Women: A Journal of Liberation, 1, No. 1 (1969), pp. 22-25.

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15. Don Donlan, "The Negative Image of Women in children's Literature," in Sexism and Youth ed. Diane Gersoni-Stavn (New York: R.R. Bowker and Company, 1974), p. 217.

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19. Feminists on Children's Media, "A Feminist Look at Children's Books," in Sexism and Youth ed. Diane Gersoni-Stavn (New York: R.R. Bowker and Company, 1974), p. 83.

20. Women on Words and Images, "Dick and Jane as Victims: Sex Stereotyping in Children's Readers," in Sexism and Youth, ed. Diane Gersoni-Stavn (New York: R.R. Bowker and Company, 1974).

21Children's Book Council, Inc. "Caldecott Medal Winners, 1985."

22. Weitzman et al., p. 1127.

23. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1981), p. 787.

24. Weitzman et al., p. 1128.

25. Weitzman et al., p. 1128.

26. Weitzman et al., p. 1131.

27. Weitzman et al., p. 1132.

28. Weitzman et al., p. 1146.

29. Weitzman et al., p. 1146.

30. Weitzman et al., p. 1148.

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